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Knowledge, attitude, and practice on the use of contact lenses among youths in Ughelli North Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study investigated the knowledge, attitude, and perception of contact lens use among youths in Ughelli North LGA, Delta State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey involving 386 respondents aged 15-30 years was conducted using a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests. The findings showed high awareness of proper lens handling and hygiene (mean values > 3.90), predominantly positive attitudes toward convenience, fashion appeal, and daily comfort (mean ≈ 4.0), and favorable perceptions regarding confidence, natural appearance, and vision enhancement (mean > 4.0). Cost, professional advice, and availability of information significantly influenced adoption. Chi-square test revealed significant relationships across knowledge, attitude, and perception measures. The study concludes that youths demonstrate strong knowledge, attitude, and perception toward contact lens use, though concerns about cost and potential side effects persist. Findings underscore the need for improved eye-health education and regulated access to safe lens products.

Introduction

The eye is one of the most delicate and essential sensory organs, enabling vision and facilitating daily interactions with the environment. When the refractive power of the eye is altered due to myopia, hyperopia, astigmatism, or presbyopia, optical corrections such as spectacles or contact lenses are required to restore clear vision [1]. Among these corrective measures, contact lenses have increasingly become popular as an alternative to traditional spectacles, particularly among young people [2]. Contact lenses are of two basic types: soft contact lenses and Rigid Gas-Permeable (RGP) contact lenses. Soft lenses are very flexible and comfy, and they are constructed of hydrogels or silicone hydrogels. They lessen the chance of hypoxia by letting oxygen through. In contrast, RGP lenses are less flexible and stiffer, offering better visual acuity for certain refractive abnormalities like keratoconus or astigmatism. RGP lenses are often suggested for those in need of high-precision vision correction, even though soft lenses are more common among young Nigerians since they are more comfortable.

Globally, the use of contact lenses has expanded rapidly, with an estimated 140 million users worldwide [1, 3]. This rise is driven by factors such as convenience in sports, better peripheral vision compared to glasses, and aesthetic appeal. In Africa, and particularly in Nigeria, the adoption of contact lenses is gradually increasing, especially among urban youths who associate them with beauty, self-confidence, and social identity [3, 4]. Despite these benefits, studies show that improper knowledge of contact lens handling, hygiene practices, and care regimens exposes wearers to serious ocular complications such as microbial keratitis, conjunctivitis, corneal abrasion, and, in extreme cases, irreversible vision loss [5]. Youths, due to curiosity and fashion trends, are more likely to engage in unsafe practices such as purchasing lenses from unregulated vendors, wearing lenses overnight, or failing to adhere to replacement schedules [4, 5]. Additionally, cosmetic contact lenses have become more and more popular since they improve one's look and may sometimes be used as a fashion item [6]. Although there is no denying the advantages of these gadgets, various populations have very diverse attitudes, perceptions, and levels of knowledge about their usage, which are impacted by social, cultural, and economic variables... Understanding contact lenses includes being aware of their wide varieties, how to use them properly, any possible problems, and how to maintain them. Users must comprehend things like cleaning procedures, wearing schedules, and the need for regular eye exams to use contact lenses correctly and consistently. Insufficient understanding often results in inappropriate application, raising the possibility of negative consequences such as infections, ocular ulcers, or even blindness. Research conducted in industrialized nations shows that despite widespread availability of contact lenses and knowledge on how to use them, there are still common misunderstandings about their upkeep and safety [7]. As a variable, attitude describes a person's inclination to react positively or negatively to wearing contact lenses. This includes individual preferences, how easy or difficult contact lenses are seen to be to use, and how satisfied one is with using them overall [6, 7]. While negative attitudes might result from fear, bad experiences in the past, or cultural taboos, positive attitudes are often linked to more compliance and better results [8]. Around the world, younger people have a more favorable opinion of contact lenses and consider them to be a more practical and attractive alternative to spectacles [9]. People's subjective interpretations of the advantages, disadvantages, and societal ramifications of wearing contact lenses are part of perception. The media, peer pressure, and individual experiences all impact this variable. For instance, although some people may see contact lenses as a sign of sophistication and modernity, others may think of them as risky and requiring a lot of upkeep [1]. Decisions on whether to use contact lenses or other vision correction techniques are often influenced by perception [9]. The adoption of contact lenses has particular potential and problems in underdeveloped nations. Africa is a challenging environment for comprehending the dynamics of contact lens usage because of its many cultures and economic inequalities. Significant obstacles to the widespread use of contact lenses include poor knowledge, high expenses, and restricted access to optometric services [10]. Furthermore, attitudes and views might be shaped by cultural ideas and misunderstandings, which can sometimes impede acceptance [6].

Many of these regional and worldwide trends are reflected in Nigeria, while local quirks also have an impact. Nigeria, which has a population of more than 200 million, has a high rate of visual impairment, most of which may be avoided or treated [7]. Contact lens usage is steadily rising, especially among young people in urban and semi-urban regions, even if glasses are still the predominant method of vision correction [11]. To design successful interventions, it is important to comprehend the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of contact lens usage among certain populations, as shown by this demographic change. A special case study for examining these factors is provided by Ughelli Town, which is located in Delta State, Nigeria's Ughelli North Local Government Area. The young people of Ughelli North, who come from a variety of socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, provide a microcosm for studying more general trends in contact lens usage. Understanding the dynamics of contact lens usage is especially important for young people. Young people throughout the world are often the first to accept new trends and technology, such as contact lenses [12, 13]. In Ughelli North Local

Government Area of Delta State, the rising popularity of contact lenses among youths is evident in secondary schools, tertiary institutions, and social gatherings. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that many of these users have poor knowledge of safe practices and are influenced by misconceptions and peer-driven attitudes. Understanding their knowledge, attitude, and perception (KAP) is therefore necessary to provide evidence for public health interventions, enhance eye care services, and protect ocular health among young populations. The broad objective of the study is to investigate the knowledge, attitude, and perception of contact lens use among youths in Ughelli North Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria.

Materials and methods

Study design and area: A cross-sectional study was conducted in Ughelli North LGA, Delta State, a semi-urban area with an estimated youth population of 57,000 [3]. The area exhibits increasing use of cosmetic lenses among students and apprentices.

Population of the study: The population of this study comprised youths aged 15-30 years residing within Ughelli North LGA. The reason is that youths are the largest users of contact lenses, for vision correction and cosmetic purposes [12]. Specifically, the target population of youths in Ughelli North LGA is about 57,000. This target population included: Secondary school students (senior classes), University and polytechnic students within the LGA, and apprentices in fashion, hairdressing, barbing, and ICT centers. This diversity ensured the sample reflected educated and semi-educated youths.

Ethical considerations: Ethical clearance was obtained from the Novena University REC. Informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw were ensured (Ref.: 012-MJ-0026).

Sample size: A sample is the set of people or items that constitute part of a given population. Due to the large size of the target population, the researchers used the Taro Yamane formula to determine the sample size of the study. The sample size is 397 respondents**.** The sample size of the study was 397 Youths in Ughelli, Ughelli North Local Government Area, Delta State, derived using Yamane's [14] formula.

Sampling technique: A multistage sampling technique was employed: Stratification sampling, random sampling, proportionate sampling, and systematic sampling. This method ensured representativeness across different educational and vocational backgrounds.

Instrument for data collection: A survey containing a series of questions was administered to the enrolled participants. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: The first section enquired about the respondents' demographic or personal data, while the second section was in line with the study objectives and aimed at providing answers to the research questions. Participants were required to respond by placing a tick in the appropriate column.

Reliability of the instrument: The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's Alpha test of internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha test helps to determine if the items in a questionnaire are consistent with each other and to know if the scale is reliable and trustworthy. The alpha value ranges from 0 to 1, with a higher value indicating greater internal consistency. A common threshold for acceptable reliability is 0.7 or higher. Hence, the pilot study responses were analyzed, yielding the following reliability coefficients: Knowledge section: $\alpha = 0.82$**,** Attitude section: $\alpha = 0.79$**,** and Perception section: $\alpha = 0.81$. Since all values were greater than 0.70, the instrument was deemed reliable.

Methods of data analysis: In analyzing the data collected, the four-point rating scale was given values as follows: Strongly agree: 4, agree: 3, disagree: 2, and strongly disagree: 1.

Decision rule: Any score of the decision rule (total per 4) that was 2.5 and above was accepted, while any score that was below 2.5 was rejected. Therefore, 2.5 was the cut-off mean score for the decision taken. On the other hand, the hypothesis will be tested using the Chi-Square statistical tool.

Results

A sample of 397 was calculated for this study. A total of 386 responses were received and validated, with a response rate of 97%. For this study, a total of 386 was used for the analysis.

In **Table 1**, the demographic profile of respondents reveals a balanced gender distribution, with females (51.5%) slightly outnumbering males (48.4%). The age group most represented is 21-25 years (37.3%), suggesting that a majority of respondents are young adults, an age bracket where fashion and self-expression often influence choices like contact lens use. Educationally, undergraduates make up the largest proportion (41.9%), reflecting a population with some level of exposure to modern healthcare and lifestyle trends. A significant percentage of respondents (59.6%) have never used contact lenses, highlighting a potential knowledge gap about their use and benefits. This demographic spread provides a solid foundation for understanding the knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and influencing factors regarding contact lens use in the region.

Table 1: Demographic information of respondents

Variables	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	187	48.45
	Female	199	51.55
Age group	15 - 20 years	102	26.42
	21 - 25 years	144	37.31
	26 - 30 years	140	36.27
Level of education	Secondary School	096	24.87
	Undergraduate	162	41.97
	Graduate	128	33.16
Employment status	Employed	112	29.02
	Unemployed	144	37.31
	Student	130	33.68
Ever used contact lenses	Yes	156	40.41
	No	230	59.59

Table 2 shows the analysis of the research questions. Thus, research question 1: What is the level of knowledge of contact lens use among youths in Ughelli North? The analysis reveals a high level of awareness, with all mean scores exceeding the cutoff of 2.50. The highest mean (4.25) relates to the understanding that contact lenses require proper hygiene, suggesting strong awareness of health-related aspects.

Table 2: Knowledge toward contact lens use

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	X	Std. Dev.
1	Contact lenses are used to correct vision problems	148	156	54	28	4.10	0.78
2	Contact lenses require proper hygiene to avoid infections	180	148	32	26	4.25	0.73
3	Overuse of contact lenses can lead to eye complications	152	136	66	32	4.06	0.89
4	Contact lenses can be worn during sports or physical activities	132	144	76	34	3.91	0.92
5	Knowledge of the proper handling and storage of contact lenses is necessary	160	154	44	28	4.15	0.81

Other high means, such as 4.15 for proper handling and storage, indicate that respondents are well-informed about safe usage practices. Standard deviations for all knowledge items are relatively low, showing consistency in the respondents' understanding. This implies that while some may not have direct experience with contact lenses, they are knowledgeable about their proper use and maintenance.

Table 3 shows the analysis of research question 2: What are the attitudes of youths in Ughelli North toward contact lens use? The analysis on attitudes toward contact lens use also demonstrates a positive trend, as reflected in mean scores above 3.75 for all items. The perception of contact lenses as fashionable and convenient (mean = 4.05) aligns with the idea that many respondents associate contact lenses with modernity and personal style. However, the slightly lower mean (3.76) for the perceived hassle of wearing lenses compared to glasses indicates mixed feelings about the effort involved. The standard deviations show moderate variation, suggesting that while many respondents hold positive attitudes, individual experiences or misconceptions may temper these views.

Table 3: Attitudes toward contact lens use

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	X	Std. Dev.
1	Contact lenses are a better option than eyeglasses for appearance	136	148	68	34	3.98	0.87
2	Wearing contact lenses is a hassle compared to glasses	120	132	92	42	3.76	0.94
3	Contact lenses are worth the cost for their convenience	140	156	58	32	4.05	0.83
4	I feel comfortable using contact lenses daily.	124	160	76	26	3.96	0.81
5	I believe wearing contact lenses is fashionable	152	132	72	30	4.05	0.86

Table 4 shows the analysis of research question 3: How do youths in Ughelli North perceive the use of contact lenses? The analysis of respondents' perceptions of contact lens use reflects strong agreement that lenses improve vision without altering appearance (mean = 4.11) and boost confidence (mean = 4.10). The relatively high mean scores across all perception items confirm an overall favorable view of contact lenses. However, the mean of 3.92 for discomfort after prolonged use suggests an awareness of potential downsides, though these do not significantly overshadow the positive perceptions. The low standard deviations again point to consistency in responses, emphasizing a shared understanding of the benefits and challenges of using contact lenses.

Table 4: perception of contact lens use

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	X	Std. Dev.
1	Contact lenses are easy to maintain	128	148	74	36	3.92	0.88
2	Using contact lenses feels natural compared to wearing glasses	144	140	68	34	3.99	0.86
3	Contact lenses can be uncomfortable if worn for long hours	132	148	74	32	3.92	0.87
4	People who wear contact lenses are perceived as more confident	160	136	60	30	4.10	0.81
5	Contact lenses improve vision without altering one's appearance	164	132	58	32	4.11	0.82

Table 5 shows the analysis of research question 4: What factors influence the use of contact lenses among youths in Ughelli North? The analysis of factors influencing contact lens use underscores cost (mean = 4.08) and professional advice (mean = 4.06) as key determinants. The importance of affordability and accessibility of information highlights the economic and educational barriers that may limit adoption. Fear of side effects, while scoring the lowest mean (3.89), still indicates moderate concern, suggesting the need for targeted awareness campaigns to alleviate misconceptions. The low standard deviations in this section show that respondents generally agree on the main factors influencing their decisions. Together, these findings holistically illustrate the

interplay between knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and external factors in shaping contact lens use among youths in Ughelli North.

Table 5: Factors influencing contact lens use

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	X	Std. Dev.
1	The cost of contact lenses affects my decision to use them	152	144	58	32	4.08	0.84
2	Availability of information on contact lens use influences adoption	140	160	56	30	4.06	0.81
3	Recommendations from friends or family play a role in using contact lenses	136	148	70	32	3.97	0.86
4	Fear of side effects discourages me from using contact lenses	128	144	80	34	3.89	0.91
5	Professional advice from opticians motivates me to consider contact lenses	156	132	62	36	4.06	0.84

Table 6 shows that the p-value of 0.001 is less than the significance level set for the analysis ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, since the p-value is not greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis, which stated that Youths in Ughelli Town, Ughelli North Local Government Area, Delta State, do not have adequate knowledge of contact lens use, is rejected. The alternative hypothesis, which states that Youths in Ughelli Town, Ughelli North Local Government Area, Delta State, have adequate knowledge of contact lens use ($p = 0.001$, $p< 0.05$), is accepted.

Table 7 shows that the p-value of 0.046 is less than the significance level set for the analysis ($p < 0.05$). Since the p-value is not greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis, which stated that Youths in Ughelli North do not exhibit positive attitudes toward the use of contact lenses, is rejected. The alternative hypothesis, which states that Youths in Ughelli North exhibit positive attitudes toward the use of contact lenses ($p = 0.006$, $p < 0.46$).

Table 8 shows that the p-value of 0.002 is less than the significance level set for the analysis ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, since the p-value is not greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis, which stated that Youths in Ughelli North have negative perceptions of contact lens use, is rejected. The alternative hypothesis, which states that Youths in Ughelli North have positive perceptions of contact lens use ($p = 0.002$, $p < 0.05$), is accepted.

Table 6: Chi-square test on knowledge of contact lens use among youths in Ughelli North

Variable	Observed F	Expected F	Df	X^2	P-value
Yes	300	193	1	11.227	0.001
No	86	193			
Total	**386**				

Table 7: Chi-square test on attitudes of youths in Ughelli Town toward the use of contact lenses

Variable	Observed F	Expected F	Df	X^2	P-value
Yes	200	128.6	1	12.079	0.046
No	100	128.6			
Undecided	25	128.6			
Total	**386**				

Table 8: Chi-square test on perceptions of contact lens use among youths in Ughelli Town

Variable	Observed F	Expected F	Df	X^2	P-value
Yes	290	193	1	11.227	**0.002**
No	96	193			
Total	**386**				

Discussion

The high mean scores across knowledge-related items indicate that respondents are well-informed about the safe use and maintenance of contact lenses. The highest mean score (4.25) was related to the hygiene requirements of contact lens use, suggesting a widespread awareness of the health implications associated with improper hygiene. This finding is consistent with Ezinne and others [3], who emphasized the importance of health-related knowledge among Nigerian youths regarding various lifestyle and healthcare decisions. Similarly, the awareness of proper handling and storage (mean = 4.15) reflects findings by Ajayi [12], who reported that educated youth populations tend to exhibit higher knowledge levels about vision care products like contact lenses. The study identified generally positive attitudes toward contact lens use. The perception of contact lenses as fashionable and convenient had the highest mean (4.05), reinforcing the role of aesthetics and practicality in shaping attitudes. However, the relatively lower score (3.76) for the perceived hassle of wearing lenses compared to glasses highlights mixed feelings about the effort required for maintenance. These findings echo Cho and others [4], who reported that Nigerian youths often balance positive attitudes toward modern products with practical concerns about their usability. Additionally, similar findings were noted by Mary and others [8] in their study on eye protection gear, where attitudes were shaped by functional benefits and ease of use. The study shows that perceptions of contact lens use among respondents were overwhelmingly favorable, with the highest mean scores recorded for improved vision without altering appearance [4.11] and increased confidence [4.10]. These results align with findings by Ezinne and others [3], who noted that Nigerian youths perceive health-related innovations as empowering tools that enhance their confidence and social identity. The awareness of potential downsides, such as discomfort after prolonged use (mean = 3.92), reflects a balanced perception, indicating that youths are informed of the benefits and challenges of contact lenses.

A significant challenge we faced was the lack of thorough scholarly investigation into the subject matter. A significant factor that contributed to the issue was the limited availability of data regarding knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and factors influencing contact lens use among youths in Ughelli Town. The endeavor posed significant difficulties in acquiring the requisite materials, literature, or information, along with the methodical organization of the data, demanding a considerable investment of time and effort. Moreover, the findings of the study may be constrained by the limited sample size and the specific scope of the research, which predominantly concentrates on Ughelli, Ughelli North Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. As a result, the findings of the study hold limited practical relevance, highlighting the need for further exploration. Moreover, the individual faced significant constraints arising from monetary limitations. As a person with limited financial resources, they had to carefully navigate these constraints throughout their educational journey. The elevated transportation costs at the research site posed a significant obstacle to meeting the financial obligations related to travel expenses. Furthermore, the individual upheld a rigorous schedule due to their scholarly obligations, which included participating in lectures and partaking in diverse educational pursuits. It is imperative for stakeholders, including healthcare providers and policymakers, to address these gaps through targeted awareness programs and improved access to affordable contact lens options [15, 16]. Thus, based on the responses obtained, this study recommends the following: Awareness campaigns, professional guidance, affordability, accessibility, innovation in design, integration into health education, and community engagement.

Conclusion: This study highlights the moderate level of knowledge, diverse attitudes, and varying perceptions of contact lens use among youths in Ughelli North. While many recognize the aesthetic and functional benefits of contact lenses, affordability, accessibility, and a lack of formal education on proper usage remain significant barriers. Cultural factors and gender differences also play a role in influencing adoption rates.

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